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ABSTRACT

Nine components of Westchester County's Family Day Care System in White Plains, New York, are outlined in some detail. Westchester County, comprising 450 square miles of cities, suburbs, towns, and villages, borders on the Bronx, and, while very affluent, has the second largest number of homeless persons in the nation, and an ethnically and economically very mixed population. Westchester's unique system of family day care has a provider turnover rate of 11 percent, in contrast to the 40 to 50 percent that is common nationally. In this report, prior to the outline of system characteristics, background information is provided on: (1) the regulatory system for family day care in New York State; (2) the functional role of the Child Care Council of Westchester in administering family day care for the county; and (3) characteristics of the family day care system in Westchester, including the satellite model the system is based upon, the independent contractor status of family day care providers in Westchester, and the two-step family day care system in which consultants are responsible for up to 20 certified family day care providers and any number of registered providers in their base area. (RH)

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Developing A Family Day Care System With A Low Turnover Rate

Workshop Outline:

.. Regulatory system for Family Day Care in New York State

.. The role of the Child Care Council of Westchester

.. Description of the Family Day Care System in Westchester

.. The components of a Family Day Care system with a low turnover rate.

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FAMILY DAY CARE IN NEW YORK STATE

New York State (outside of New York City) has a dual system of regulations for Family Day Care. Anyone who is providing child care for three or more children away from their own homes for less than 24 hours per day in a family home which is operated for such purpose, for more than five hours per week, must obtain either a permit or a certificate.

Generally, local offices of the Department of Social Services certify family day care providers to provide child care for their clients. The regional offices (4 in number) of the New York State Department of Social Services issue permits to anyone who wishes to provide family day care and who is not certified by a local department of social services. Also, authorized child caring agencies can certify family day care homes for their own use.

In New York City, family day care homes are licensed by the New York City Department of Health.

THE ROLE OF THE CHILD CARE COUNCIL OF WESTCHESTER

The Child Care Council of Westchester is a private, not-for-profit organization supported by funds from the United Way, local county grants, state grants, corporate contracts, memberships and fund raising. The Council is also known as a "R & R" or "Resource and Referral" agency.

The Council provides:

- a referral and educational service for parents seeking child care
- a unified voice for advocacy for Child Care in Westchester County
- technical assistance for child care centers
- child care assistance for employees, lunchtime seminars, and consultants for corporations
- recruitment of family day care providers, and assistance in the development of child care centers.
- administration of the family day care program for Westchester County.

In 1982, the local Westchester County Department of Social Services, contracted with the Child Care Council to administer Family Day Care for the County. The Council carries out all aspects of this process with the exception of signing the Family Day Care Certificates.

Member Agency of the United Way of Westchester, Inc.

DESCRIPTION OF THE FAMILY DAY CARE SYSTEM IN WESTCHESTER

Westchester County is 450 square miles of suburban settings as well as cities, towns and villages. The county borders on the Bronx which is one of the five boroughs of New York City. The population of Westchester County is approximately 866,000. Although Westchester County is a very affluent county, it has the second largest number of homeless individuals after New York City. The county, has a very mixed population, both ethnically and economically.

A. The Satellite Model

Westchester's Family Day Care system is based on a satellite model. Outreach staff from the Child Care Council, known as Family Day Care Consultants, are based in local day care centers. (See attached map).

The consultants are responsible for up to 20 certified family day care providers and any number of registered providers in the area in which they are based. The purpose of this structure is threefold:

1. to provide a continuum of child care services for parents in a community
2. to professionalize family day care by linking providers with the rest of the child care community
3. to have Child Care Council staff readily available to providers and parents in various communities.

B. The Status of Family Day Care Providers in Westchester

The Family Day Care providers in Westchester can:

- set their own fees
- have a combined enrollment of private paying and subsidized children
- determine their own hours
- choose their own clients
- have a foster care license and family day care certificate

In other words, the providers are independent contractors. The services of the Child Care Council are provided free of charge to the family day care providers.

C. A Two-Step Family Day Care System

Family Day Care Provider	Family Day Care Consultant
1. - requests information and is sent a packet outlining safety and documentation requirements	
- contacts the Council when she has requirements needed: . 2 references . medical clearance and tine (T.B.) test for provider . safety and health requirements	- conducts a site visit: collects documentation, verifies safety requirements, provides technical assistance.

Family Day Care Provider	Family Day Care Consultant
- is voluntarily listed with the Council, receives child care referrals and can care for up to two children. Is known as a registered provider.	- carries out workshops to which all registered providers in that community are invited.
2.- has one or two children in care and calls the Council because she is interested in certification. She completes or collects: . NYS application . medical clearances and tine tests for other family members . third reference . clearance form for the New York State Child Abuse and Maltreatment Register	- begins the certification process, assisting provider with the additional documentation needed for certification. While the file is being prepared for the Department of Social Services, on-site orientation for certification begins.
- provider receives certificate from the Westchester County Department of Social Services	- The Consultant visits certified homes bi-weekly and provides: . on-site technical assistance . monthly workshops . support with parent - child relationships . toy/book lending resources . assistance with day care subsidies, and USDA

THE COMPONENTS OF A FAMILY DAY CARE SYSTEM WITH A LOW TURNOVER RATE.
(THE WESTCHESTER FAMILY DAY CARE SYSTEM HAS A TURNOVER RATE OF 11% COMPARED TO A 40% TO 50% TURNOVER WHICH IS COMMON NATIONALLY).

1. Committment of Provider

- Self-initiated contact - provider must complete initial steps before connection is made with the Council.
- Formal regulation takes place after provider has experienced the business and personal aspects of family day care (that is, the provider already has provided care for at least one child).

2. Networking

- Providers have opportunities to meet together locally.
- Providers are encouraged to visit each others homes and to give each other their telephone numbers.
- Rides to workshops and substitutes are shared.
- Bi-monthly newsletter with information on child development, program activities, personal information, etc. Enough copies are provided so they can be shared with parents.

3. Financial incentives

- Financial assistance with required medicals is provided by the County.
- Start up equipment-blocks, puzzles, books, baby equipment, etc is provided.
- United States Department of Agriculture Food Program (U.S.D.A.) is available.
- Adequate subsidies for parents who qualify.
- Discounts for books, workshops, magazines.
- Any 'freebees' that come along.

4. Public recognition

- Newspaper articles on family day care as a profession.
- Visits to family day care homes by elected officials.
- Tours of homes as a part of local conferences
- Recognition on Women's Equality Day by the County Executive.
- T.V. and radio spots include providers
- Council continually promotes Family Day Care providers as professionals
- Linking Family Day Care providers with the rest of the Day Care Community.

5. Workshops/Professional Development

- Availability of workshops on topics of interest. Workshops are held in evenings in local day care centers. Door prizes and refreshements are included.
- Information on all related workshops and conferences is provided - for example: WAEYC, National and State Family Day Care Association Conference. Financial assistance with registration fees and travel costs is provided whenever possible.
- Additional opportunities are available for providers who are interested, for example: training in the HIgh Scope curriculum, Child Development Association (CDA) training and advising, linkage with local colleges.

6. Recognition amongst peers

- Annual dinner in a nice restaurant. Special guests included Senators, Commissioner of Department of Social Services, etc.
- Workshops certificates, recognition and service certificates are awarded.

7. Encouragement of Initiative on the part of Providers

- Family Day Care cookbook
- Planning and carrying out of Annual Dinner
- Workshops held in provider homes
- Provider assistance in planning workshops.

8. On-going Supportive Services

- Toy and Book Lending Library
- On-site contact with another early childhood professional
- On-going program and early childhood information that provider can use and share with parents (ie. printed handouts).
- Face to face and telephone support with parent - child relationships.
- Assistance with paperwork requirements for certification
- On-site technical assistance for child management and program, business aspects of family day care, resource information.

9. Treatment of Family Day Care Providers

- Providers are always treated as professionals
- Expectations for providers are high.
- Our role with providers is as a resource and a support to them.

County

Main Through Routes